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MB 07-18

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House of Representatives

State of Iowa

Eighty-First General Assembly

STATEHOUSE

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

COMMITTEES

Local Government, *Ranking Member*

Environmental Protection

State Government

Elections Subcommittee

APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE

Administration and Regulation

Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Media Bureau Docket No. 07-18
News Corporation, Directv Group
Inc. and Liberty Media Corporation
seek approval to transfer control of FCC
authorizations and licenses

October 23, 2007

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to request that the FCC condition any approval of the transfer of the Directv licenses pursuant to MB Docket No. 07-18, to an agreement by Liberty Media Corporation to provide local-into-local TV service by satellite in ALL 210 Nielsen Designated Market Areas – as News Corporation agreed when the FCC approved its acquisition of Directv Group in 2003.

Conditions regarding the viability of small market TV stations in rural America have not improved since the 2003 license transfer of Directv to News Corporation. They face serious economic challenges made worse by restrictions on access to households receiving satellite TV.

KYOU (Fox 15, Ottumwa, Iowa) does not have access to the 40% of households in its market area receiving satellite TV. Beyond the economic damage suffered by KYOU, these households are deprived of local public safety information, including local weather alerts, Amber Alerts, and other disaster information such as water and power outages and school closures.

While Directv claims that capacity limits keep it from carrying small market stations, it continues to add other programming and non programming services. They recently announced plans to launch 100 High Definition channels yet this year and local HD channels in the large markets. Apparently there is plenty of capacity – except when it comes to small market stations.

I understand that other services may be more lucrative to Directv and that it has a responsibility to its stockholders, it also has a responsibility to meet the local needs of the communities it serves, as intended by Congress when it established local-into-local licenses in 1999. At that time, satellite companies argued that local-into-local licenses were necessary for them to compete with cable. How times have changed.

I therefore urge the commission to reconfirm its 2003 decision regarding the obligations of Directv and condition this license transfer on a commitment by Liberty Media Corporation to maintain local-into-local service in ALL 210 Nielsen Designated Market Areas.

Sincerely,

Mary Gaskill

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State Representative, District # 93

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